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PACHYSANDRA

"The Good Samaritan of the Garden"

HUGH B. BARCLAY

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NARBERTH, PA.

PREFACE

THE nation-wide interest in the plant *Pachysandra terminalis* (Pak-i-san-dra term-i-nal-is) has necessitated the writing of this brief history of the plant, its characteristics and uses.

It is a decided pleasure to write about my friend *Pachysandra*, for seldom does one find a subject combining to such a marked degree both utility and beauty.

The slogan used by an extensive grower of this plant, "Benefit and Beautify with *Pachysandra*," is therefore a fitting one, as is also the phrase, "The Good Samaritan of the Garden," used by a well-known horticulturist in his description of the plant.

The illustrations shown herein are from photographs taken upon various private estates near Philadelphia and New York, and as these plantings have been established from fifteen to twenty-five years they prove conclusively the merits of the plant as a perpetual evergreen ground-cover for sun or shade.

The extracts from testimonial letters as quoted are taken from letters on file from prominent Landscape Architects and Horticulturists in the author's office. Names of the writers will be given upon request.

It is the author's wish that readers who have unusual or difficult Ground-cover, Roadside or Woodland plantings in mind, submit their problems to him. All advice is given without cost or obligation.

Very truly,

HUGH B. BARCLAY.

DESCRIPTION

PACHYSANDRA terminalis (from the Greek, meaning leather-like foliage and with flower spikes appearing on the terminal shoots) belongs botanically to the Boxwood family, and is found growing wild only in the mountain regions of Japan, hence its common name, "Japanese Spurge."

It was first introduced into America about forty years ago, but its use and beauty were not fully realized until years later, probably because its scarcity prevented large plantings being made.

Pachysandra is a stoloniferous rooted hardy evergreen plant growing to a height of not more than eight inches. Its flowers are inconspicuous and it does not mature seed in this country. Its foliage resembles that of our native Laurel or Kalmia, being a rich deep green in shade and lighter in full sunlight.

HARDINESS

Pachysandra is hardy in all parts of the United States and Canada. It grows equally well in the warmer climates of Florida, Southern California and even Hawaii.

EVERGREEN

The plant does not lose its leaves, they retain their color through winter and summer, although the color as stated, will be somewhat lighter in direct sun than in shade.

HEIGHT

Pachysandra will maintain an even height of about six inches or not more than eight inches.

DISEASE FREE

No fungus or other disease affects Pachysandra.

INSECT PROOF

Insects will not attack the plant, nor will any animal eat the root stem or foliage.

SHADE

A distinct characteristic of Pachysandra is the fact that it thrives equally well in dense shade or partial shade, whether from buildings or trees, or in full sun. This unusual characteristic of the plant permits its use in many places.



PACHYSANDRA May Be Used Successfully Upon Steep Banks and Terraces

SOIL

Pachysandra will do well in practically any soil, either rich or lean, heavy or light, wet or dry, excepting however, very stiff clay (hardpan) or highly alkaline soils such as are found in some of our Western States where the soil must be neutralized to a degree.

ROOT SYSTEM

The root system of Pachysandra is peculiar in that it does not become to any extent greater with age. In place of extended roots it sends out stolons, root-like in character, which arise to the surface and form new tops like the parent plant. Thus plantings become in time a close mass of foliage.

In established plantings this stoloniferous root system becomes a mat two or more inches through, capable of holding the steepest bank from erosion and permits Pachysandra to thrive in shallow unfertile soil and stand extreme drought without harm.

USES OF PACHYSANDRA

I have enumerated here a few of the many uses of Pachysandra; acquaintance with the plant will suggest many more.

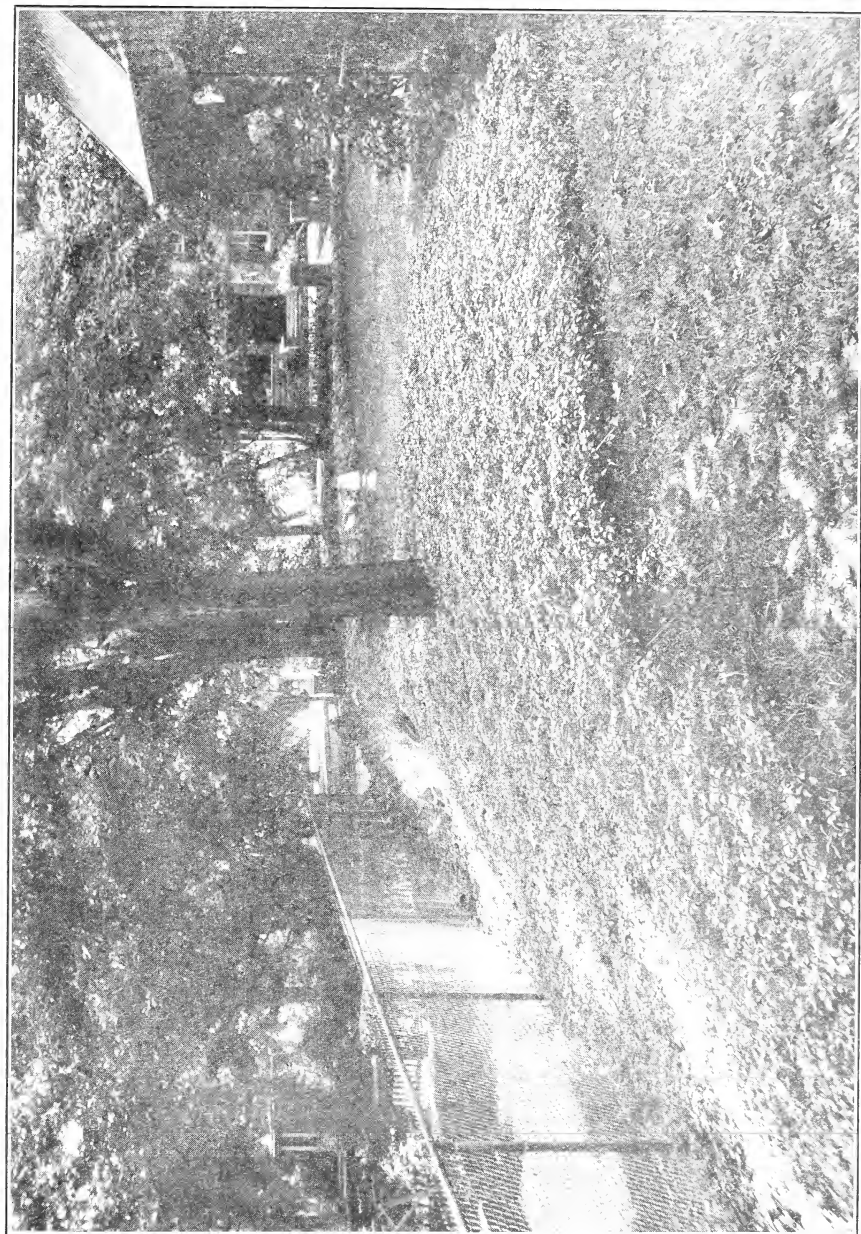
GROUND COVER USE UNDER TREES

Landscape Architects, Arborists and Tree Experts are quite agreed that plantings of Pachysandra under aged and undernourished trees is of direct and great benefit to such trees.

The logic of such decisions is quite evident when we consider that Pachysandra furnishes for the tree almost as exact forest conditions as a real forest. Its close luxuriant foliage excludes the hot rays of the sun from the tree roots, prevents baking of the soil and prevents also EVAPORATION of moisture, either by sun or sweeping winds.

Falling moisture either as rain or dew is quickly gathered by the Pachysandra foliage and carried to the soil beneath. The matted stoloniferous roots of Pachysandra keep the soil in an open porous condition, permitting this falling moisture and food material to reach the roots of the tree.

In addition, and most important, plantings of Pachysandra permit the falling leaves of the trees to remain where they fall, to furnish, when rotted, food material for the tree. And quantities of humus, manure or fertilizer may be given the tree as occasion demands, and being entirely hidden by the foliage of the Pachysandra, are not unsightly.



PACHYSANDRA Luxuriant Under Norway Maples

In addition also to the direct benefit of *Pachysandra*, the preparation of the soil for planting is beneficial to the tree. Such preparation for planting consists of digging the soil to a depth of six inches, adding two or more inches of Peat Moss and an equal amount of well-rotted manure and digging in.

The Peat Moss is advised because of its moisture retaining qualities and because it greatly assists in keeping the soil in a porous open state.

Quoting from the opinions of one of America's foremost Landscape Architects: "I am of the opinion that *Pachysandra* is of immense benefit planted as a Ground Cover under old trees, and I know of numerous occasions where it has been so used in the vicinity of Boston."

Another equally prominent Landscape Architect writes me: "In addition to its attractive appearance, we find it a great aid in maintaining certain soil conditions and highly recommend its use in the restoration and preservation of old or under-nourished trees."

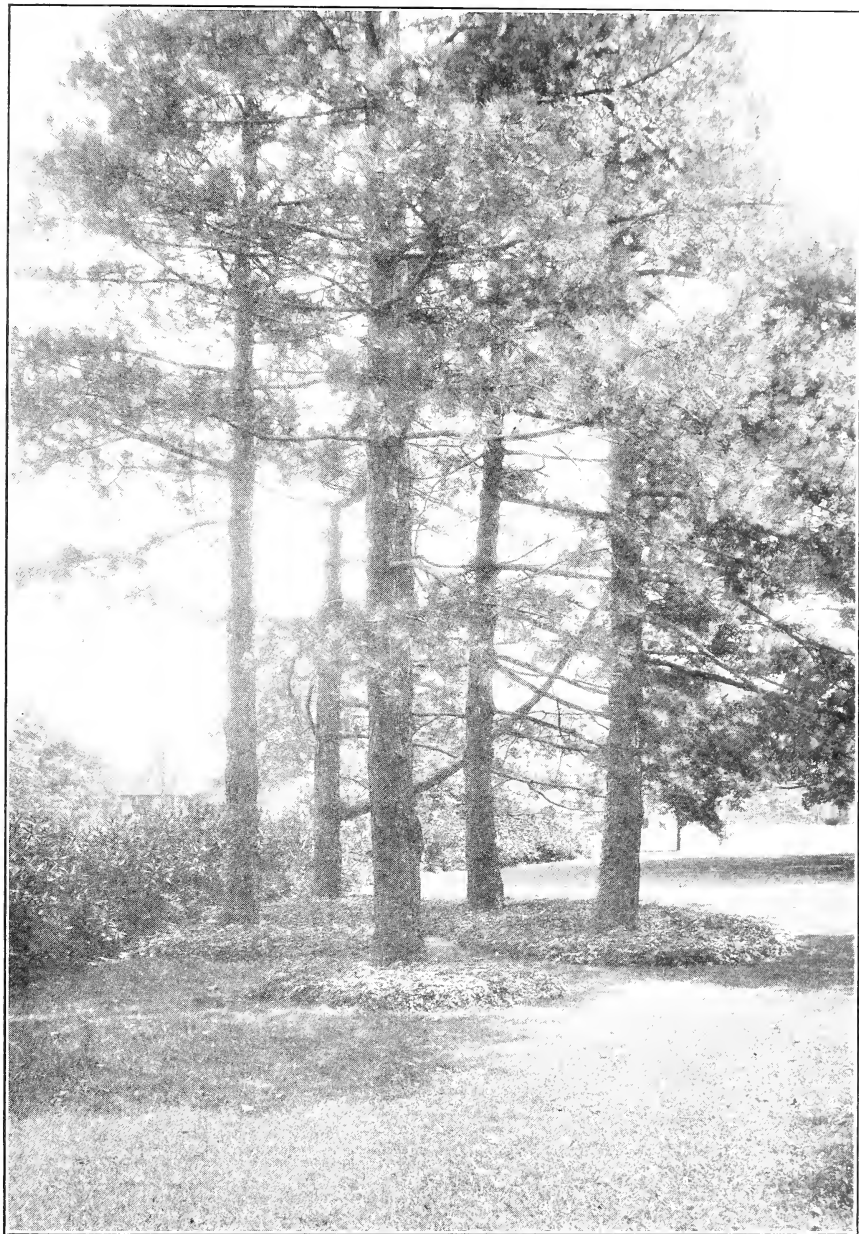
A nationally known Tree Expert Company writes that they instruct their field men in its use and strongly recommend it.

The benefits of *Pachysandra* are not confined to any particular tree or trees. It grows equally as well under Beech, Maple, Oaks and, strange to say, under Pines and other evergreens where few plants can exist.

Its use as a Ground Cover under all Evergreen and Shrub plantings is beneficial to them as it is to trees. And at the same time it prevents weeds and eliminates cultivation, which is not necessary or beneficial to either shrubs or evergreens, notwithstanding opinions to the contrary.

A GREEN RUG FOR THE OUTDOOR LIVING ROOM

The beauty of the well-kept small or large estate cannot help but be sadly marred by raw unsightly bare ground showing under trees and shady places and, try as we will, grass and other plants will not grow in such locations. *Pachysandra* will grow there and quickly if properly planted cover all unsightly soil and give as great a beauty as your Kirman or Sarouk Rug does to your indoor living room.



PACHYSANDRA Flourishing Under Pine Trees



A Green Rug for the Outdoor Living Room
Pachysandra and Trees, both receiving ideal conditions for growth.

Some of the especial uses for Pachysandra for both Beneficial and Beautiful results are:

TERRACES AND EMBANKMENTS

The matted roots of Pachysandra are capable of holding the steepest banks. It may be used for such positions alone or in combination with other ground-cover plants, Vinca Minor, Euonymus, Prostrate Junipers, etc., with most pleasing and colorful effects.

BORDERING WALKS AND DRIVES

Pachysandra is ideal for such borders. They may vary in width from a foot wide to several feet and at all times present an even neat appearance. Such borders may be planted with Spring Flowering Bulbs, Crocus, Narcissus, Tulips, which will grow readily among it.

FOUNDATION PLANTINGS

It is particularly unsightly to see the exposed soil closely to house or building foundations. Pachysandra should be used in such places in combination with evergreens or other plants used, so that only a mat of green foliage is seen.

AS A FACING DOWN PLANT

All shrub and other plantings appear more beautiful if low plants are used in front to bring such plantings down to meet the lawn. Pachysandra is most ideal for such a purpose, particularly in shady places. There are other plants which can be used in sun if one wishes.

CITY YARDS

Pachysandra is one of the few plants which will withstand city conditions of smoke and soot, and oftentimes entire city yards are clothed with the happy plant.

A FEW MORE USES

For Winter and Summer Window Boxes.

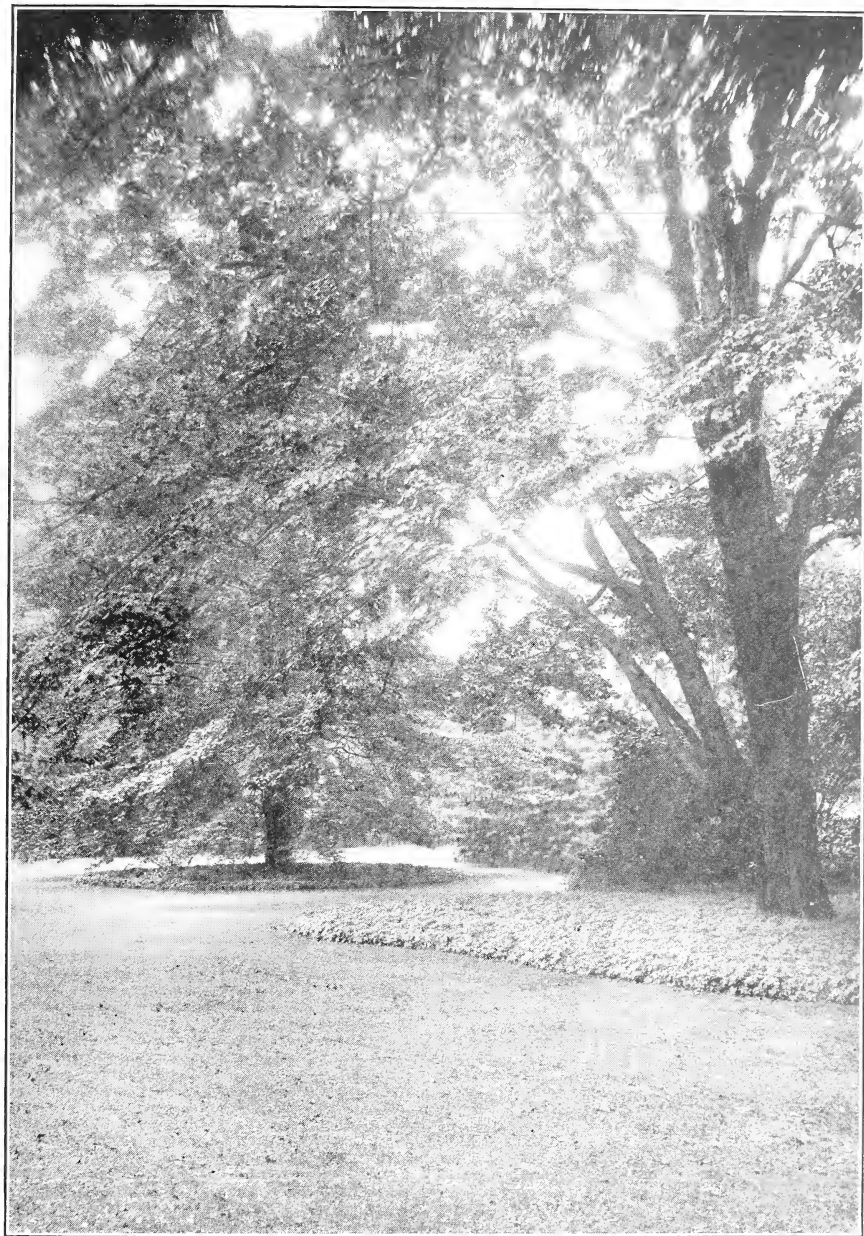
For Enclosed Porches and Loggias, Roof Gardens, etc.

For Areaway Windows, odd corners, etc.

For Cemetery and Mausoleum plantings.

All these and lots more uses seem impossible for one variety of plant, but I assure you it is quite true.

The reason is because Pachysandra is an adaptable plant. Happy anywhere Wet or Dry, Cold or Hot, Shade or Sun, asking little, giving much.



PACHYSANDRA Again Most Happily Growing Under Beech and Maples

DISTANCES TO SPACE PLANTS

Pachysandra has one peculiarity, for, unlike many plants we are familiar with, **IT LOVES TO BE CROWDED, AND DOES NOT BEGIN TO GROW PROPERLY UNTIL IT IS CROWDED.** (See illustration.) The reason for this peculiarity is because the creeping stolons (which later form tops) need the protecting shade of the parent plant foliage, otherwise they are injured upon emerging from the soil into the air, and another stolon must grow again, which may meet the same fate upon emerging. Best and quickest results are obtained by spacing medium or small plants four to the square foot of space in the area to be planted. Such spacing will give positive good results if soil conditions are present.

SIZES OF PLANTS

Most Nurserymen and Seedsmen sell Pachysandra either as pot grown plants or as field plants. Sizes of plants will of course vary according to age in the field or pot. I have not found it economical to use extremely large plants because if one uses more medium size plants more closely spaced, results will be more pleasing and satisfactory. One should be sure in purchasing plants that such plants were grown from cuttings and are not root divisions, or in other words, stolons. Stolons are not plants and never acceptable, for they in themselves will not make proper roots though they may continue to exist for some time. Field plants may be safely planted until mid-summer. Pot grown plants may be planted at any season.

COST OF PLANTING

To the uninitiated, costs of planting extended areas, as underneath trees, may seem excessive, even at the present reasonable prices for plants, because with close spacing of plants, as advised, a large tree will require possibly two thousand or more plants.

Pachysandra, however, properly planted is a permanent thing. The plantings illustrated and many others seen have been established twenty or more years and are yearly better, therefore the expense is well worth the outlay.

A comparison, over a period of ten years, with yearly expense of seeding or sodding of such areas with no benefits accorded by doing so, will readily prove that the Pachysandra is far less expensive in that time. To which must be added those incalculable items, **BENEFIT AND BEAUTY.**



Detail of Foliage and Crowded Condition PACHYSANDRA Likes

PREPARATION OF SOIL AND PLANTING HEAVY SOILS

Few plants enjoy heavy soil even if rich, and for such soil I advise the addition of two inches of sand and two inches of Peat Moss dug into the soil, not more than four to six inches deep. If soil is rich, no manure need be added. Plant firmly.

MEDIUM SOILS

Addition of one inch of sand and two inches of Granulated Peat Moss or fine compost, dug four to six inches deep (not deeper). No manure unless the soil is poor. Plant firmly.

LIGHT SOILS

Addition of two inches of Granulated Peat Moss, of Leaf Mould or Compost, Peat Moss preferred. Add manure if soil is poor, but do not dig such under more than six inches, except for Euonymous or similar deep-rooted plants. Plant firmly.

VERY POOR LIGHT SOIL

Add manure and Peat Moss (or Compost), two inches of each. Dig in deeper, about eight inches, level and add one inch more Peat Moss. Dig lightly and plant firmly.

HARD GROUND

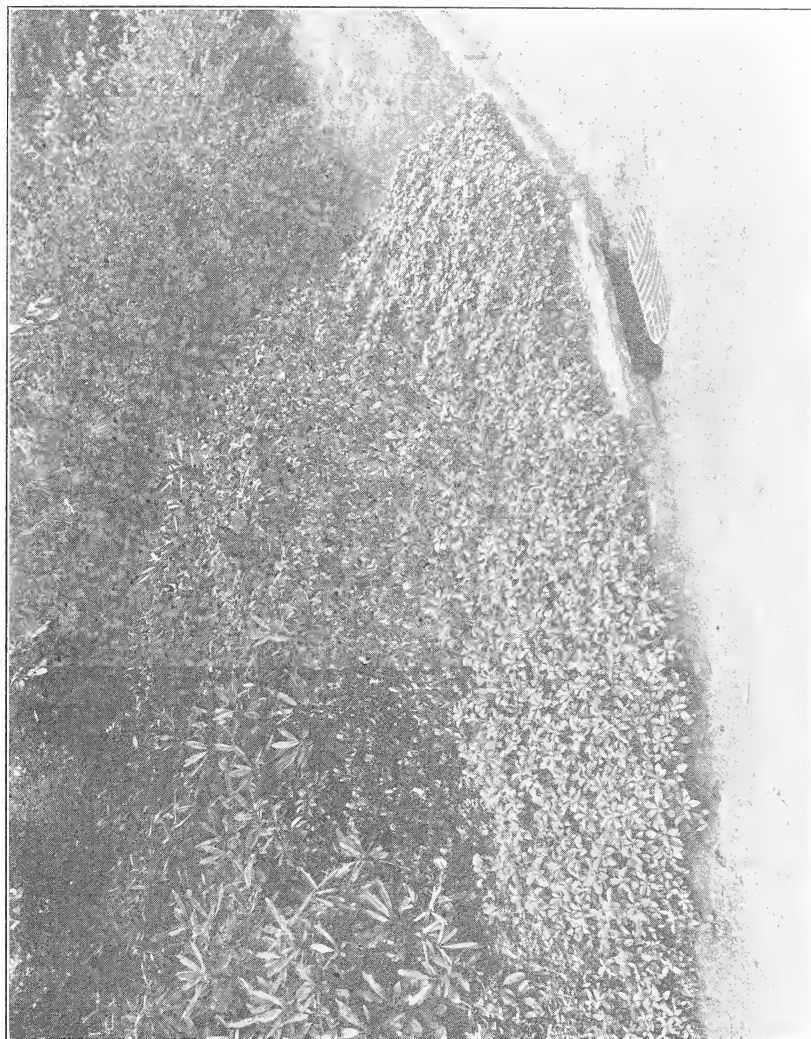
The soil about many new homes where grading has been done will be found to be extremely hard from the presence of clay subsoil with the top soil. Such soil should be first broken up well by deep digging. Two inches of sand and two inches of Peat Moss or manure added, again turned and well broken up, and then another inch each of sand and Peat Moss added and dug in four or six inches deep. Plant firmly.

UNDER TREES

The soil under large trees is invariably poor, and contains little humus. Bearing in mind that ANY PLANT planted under a tree has keen competition, any added attention to the preparation of soil is good advice. I advise first the digging of the soil to be planted to a depth of six to eight inches. Add three inches of manure and two inches of Peat Moss or Compost, and sand if the soil is very heavy. Dig well again, add another inch of Compost or Peat Moss, and dig lightly in. Plant firmly.

MULCHING

A light mulch, one-half to one inch of Granulated Peat Moss, Buckwheat Hulls, or fine Compost, is beneficial to any planting and where possible should be given after planting.



PACHYSANDRA Used as a Facing Down and Edging Plant

GRANULATED PEAT MOSS

I recommend Granulated Peat Moss highly in the preparation of soil for planting on account of its ability to hold moisture. Where this material cannot be had, commercial humus, leaf soil or fine compost may be used as substitutes to condition the soil.

OTHER GROUND COVER PLANTS

There are many other useful and beautiful plants which may be used as Ground-cover plants for various purposes. Among such would be included Ajuga, English Ivy, Periwinkle (Vinca Minor) Veronica, Euonymous in variety, etc.

Many of these plants may be used with extremely good effect in combination with Pachysandra, particularly for extensive plantings, or alone if properly selected for the position. Pachysandra is, however, the only ground cover plant which thrives in practically any position.



